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T-515
January 6, 1945

THE PROBLEM OF THE TURKISH STRAITS

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE QUESTION OF THE STRAITS

A. The Essence of the Question of the Straits

Because of their position as a great strategic waterway connecting the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas with the Black Sea, the Turkish Straits are of importance to all the great maritime nations of the world. The Straits have never played a great role in American commerce and shipping, and the strategic and political interests of the United States in the Straits are less important than are those of the great powers of Europe. Nevertheless, the United States has displayed a political interest in fostering a régime of the Straits which would contribute to the peace, stability and security of the regions served by and affected by the Straits. In the course of the present war, President Roosevelt has declared "the defense of Turkey vital to the defense of the United States". 1/

The essence of the problem of the Straits may be summed up in the question: What régime should be provided for the Straits in order to assure freedom of commerce for all countries and to contribute to the political stability and security of Turkey, Russia, the countries of Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean region? More specifically, the problem of the Straits today may be stated as follows: Does the Montreux Convention, the régime of the Straits established in 1936, satisfy the requirements of assuring freedom of commerce and contributing to the political stability and sense of security of Turkey and her neighbors in the regions of Southeastern Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea? If so, is there any reason for changing the régime established at Montreux? If not, what alternative régime would best meet these requirements?

B. Historical

1/ See especially T-390. The United States and the Question of the Turkish Straits. 9 pp.

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B. Historical Significance of the Problem

The problem of the Straits is one of the oldest and most persistent of historical issues, dating almost from the dawn of history. 2/ To the ancient Greeks the Straits were especially important in their rôle of connecting the Aegean with the Black Sea. The Roman and Byzantine empires envisaged the region more, perhaps, as a bridge between Europe and Asia, as did their successors, the Ottoman sultans, who conquered Constantinople (Istanbul) in May 1453 and converted the Black Sea into an Ottoman lake within the next twenty years.

The modern history of the problem of the Straits may be said to begin with the arrival of Imperial Russia on the Black Sea and the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji (1774), which gave Russia commercial access to the Straits, though these waters remained closed to warships, in accordance with "the ancient rule of the Sultan's empire." By the Treaty of the Dardanelles (1809), the British Government agreed to respect the principle of closure. The Russo-Turkish Treaty of Adrianople (1829) confirmed commercial freedom in the Straits, but in 1833 3/ the Russians were able, through close alliance with the Sublime Porte, to impose closure of the Straits to foreign warships at Russia's command, thereby converting the Black Sea potentially into a Russian lake and subjecting the Ottoman Empire to Russian domination.

Under British

2/ For a brief but useful survey of the problem see James T. Shotwell and Francis Deák, Turkey at the Straits: A Short History (New York, Macmillan, 1940), 196 pp.

3/ See S. V. Gorianov, Le Posphore et les Dardanelles (Paris, 1910), 25-81; V. J. Puryear, England, Russia, and the Straits Question, 1844-1856 (Berkeley, University of California, 1931); F. E. Mosely, Russian Diplomacy and the Opening of the Eastern Question in 1838 and 1839 (Cambridge, Harvard, 1934); R. J. Kerner, "Russia's New Policy in the Near East after the Peace of Adrianople; including the Text of the Protocol of 16 September 1829," V Cambridge Historical Journal 3 (1937), 280-90. See also T-532: Principal Treaties and Conventions with Respect to the Problem of the Turkish Straits (1774-1936), with

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Under British pressure, however, Russia had to abandon its position, and in the conventions of 1840 and 1841 the Straits were open to the commerce of all nations and closed, under established international rule to foreign war vessels. The legal rule of closure remained a part of the public law of Europe from that time until 1914 despite the vicissitudes of international politics and intervening wars. The Treaty of Paris (1856,) following the Crimean War, did not alter the fundamental rule, though it demilitarized the Black Sea. Neither the Convention of London (1871), 4/ by which Russia regained the right to arm on the Black Sea, nor the Treaty of Berlin (1878), made essential changes in this respect, though the penetration of Germany into the Ottoman Empire before 1914 altered the political situation in the Near East fundamentally. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the close of the World War of 1914-1918 and the rise of the new Turkey under Atatürk brought still another chapter into the complicated story of the problem of the Straits.

C. The Geography of the Region of the Straits.

The Turkish Straits, which separate the shores of Turkish Anatolia from those of European Turkey and connect the Black Sea with the Aegean and Mediterranean, are composed of the narrow and strategic waters of the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus. 5/

Altogether

4/ For convenience see Turkey No. 16 (1878). Treaties and Other Documents Relating to the Black Sea, the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, 1535-1878. (Translations). Cmd. 1953.

5/ See especially Jacques Ancel, "Les bases géographiques de la question des détroits," Le monde slave, 5th year, 1, No. 2 (February 1928), 238-53; Colonel E. Bakirdzis, "Les Puissances et la nouvelle Turquie," Affaires Danubiennes, No. 6 (1940), 315-335; Vidal de la Blache and L. Gallois, Géographie universelle, VIII, 82-87.

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Altogether the Straits have a total length of about 186 miles, the Dardanelles being 37 miles in length, the Sea of Marmara 110 miles, and the Bosphorus a little more than 18 miles.

The Dardanelles have an average width of about two and one-half miles, though just within their entrance from the Aegean Sea they are about four and one-half miles wide. The waters narrow down to about 1860 yards at Nagara and to only 1400 yards at Çanakkale. The current through the Dardanelles is usually swift, varying from almost two miles per hour to about five miles in the Narrows. Ports within the Dardanelles are substantially limited to Rodosto, on the European shore, and Çanakkale, on the Asiatic, the latter being an inspection station for all ships entering the Dardanelles.

The Sea of Marmara, which attains a maximum width of fifteen miles, has a number of small ports, largely serving local trade, such as Ismit, Gemlik, Mudania, and Banderma. There are some islands, such as the Prinkipo group, which are of local significance.

The Bosphorus varies in width from about 3,200 yards at the Marmara entrance to 4,000 yards at the entrance into the Black Sea above Kavak. The narrowest point is between the old Turkish fortresses of Rumeli and Anadolu Hissar (1200 yards). The average depth of the Bosphorus, like that of the Dardanelles, is more than 160 feet, while it reaches a depth of 316 feet at the narrowest points. The average current in the Bosphorus is about two to three knots per hour. Unlike the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus winds and twists, with many capes, bays and basins from one to two miles in width.

Istanbul, the former capital of the Ottoman Empire and the great commanding city of the Straits, is situated on both shores of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. Istanbul's position at the junction of two most important routes of communication, the maritime route between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean and the overland route between Europe and Asia, has given the city a remarkable superiority over most cities in the Near East. The harbor of the Golden Horn, a gulf formed by the Marmara and the Bosphorus, is about four miles long and has an

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average depth of 165 to 195 feet.

The territory within the region of the Straits has an area of about 22,417 square kilometers, or 8,736 square miles. ^{6/} The population is about 1,436,000. The larger portion of this population is concentrated on the European shore, the Istanbul area alone having more than 883,000 inhabitants. With the exception of Istanbul, which is 78 percent Turkish, the area as a whole is more than 90 percent Turkish in composition.

D. Strategic Approaches to the Straits

The fate of Turkey is largely dependent on that of the region of the Straits, which may be approached from both land and sea. The two sea approachers are those of the Aegean, with the islands of Imbros and Tenedos at the very entrance of the Straits, and the Black Sea. Traditionally consideration of the strategic factors in the Straits has centered around the interrelations of land and sea power. The new factor of air power may, however, fundamentally alter the setting of the problem. A non-riparian fleet could hardly challenge Soviet air power, by entering the Black Sea, while Soviet air power, based on the region of the Straits, could dominate Turkey and the Balkan States. On the other hand, air power based on Aegean (Dodecanese Islands, for instance) or Greek mainland bases could control passage of the Straits in time of war. From Asia the Straits may be approached from across the Anatolian plateau or from Armenia, the latter being the route of relatively easy access over which the great migrations from the east have come in the past. From the Balkan region a number of approaches may serve the forces of conquest--as they have served the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. These are: (1) The lower course of the Danube to the Black Sea and the Straits; (2) The valley

of the

^{6/} This includes only the districts actually on the shoreline. If the area of the entire district is included it reaches about 22,803 square miles and the population about 2,559,267. See Türkiye Cumhuriyeti. Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü. Genel Nüfus Sayımı. Türkiye Nüfusu. Kat'f Tasnif Neticeleri. (Réconsement général de la population. Au 20 Octobre 1935. Population de la Turquie. Résultats définitifs) Ankara, 1937. Table 4.

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of the Maritsa River to Adrianople and the Straits; (3) The valley of the Morava-Vardar from Belgrade to Salonica, thence overseas to the Straits; and (4) The Via Egnatia from Durazzo to Salonica and Adrianople to the Straits, or overseas from Salonica. 7/

In general, the obstacle which the Straits present between the continents of Europe and Asia is not a problem of distances. It is the geographical position and the relief of the surrounding country which give the region of the Straits its historical and strategic significance.

II. TURKEY AT THE STRAITS

A. Strategic Interests

The international position of the Republic of Turkey, like that of the Ottoman Empire in the past, arises from the fact that the country is a bridge between Europe and Asia and that it commands the Straits between the Black Sea and the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. Whatever affects the security of the Straits threatens the very life of Turkey as well. More directly than any other Power, therefore, Turkey is concerned with the problem of the security of this great waterway. As a connecting link between Europe and Asia, Turkey is concerned with the security of the Balkan and Asiatic approaches of the Straits and with the problem of the political security of these regions. Since the Straits connect the Black and the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas, the Turkish Republic is vitally interested in the security and stability of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

B. Economic Interests

The economic interests of Turkey in the Straits are equally direct and vital. Istanbul is the only

great

7/ Colonel E. Bakirdzis, "La valeur stratégique de la Grèce pour le Proche Orient," Affaires Danubiennes, No. 5 (1939), 231-48; "Les pays du Bas-Danube; Etude Geopolitique," ibid., No. 7 (1940), 61-84.

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great European port of European Turkey and the largest and most important commercial center of the country, though it declined somewhat in importance during the inter-war period. 8/

Something of the economic interests of the Straits to Turkey may be gleaned from the statistics concerning shipping passing through these waters. 9/ In 1920 Turkish shipping calling at Istanbul totaled only 77,331 tons and fell to only 18,453 tons in 1921. 10/ Exclusive of about 500,000 tons of sailing and coast vessels, more than 700,000 tons of Turkish shipping passed the Straits in 1924 and almost 800,000 tons in 1925. By 1935 Turkish shipping in the Straits was almost 2,000,000 tons and more than 3,000,000 tons in 1939. By July 1940 there were 290 vessels of 217,381 tons under Turkish registry.

In 1920,

8/ Istanbul continued to be one of the more important seaports of the world, owing its importance not so much to the advantages offered by the port itself as to its position relative to the Black Sea and the countries whose commerce inclines toward the Black Sea. Prior to the World War of 1914-18 only about 15 percent of the ships calling at Istanbul made it their final destinations; the rest were in transit to Russian or other Black Sea and Danubian ports. Since Istanbul has no manufacturing industry to speak of, nor any agricultural hinterland affording adequate support, it depends on commerce and shipping. Izmir (Smyrna) is the principal export shipping center of Turkey and is significant as a distributing center for its rich Anatolian hinterland. Mersin (Mersina) is the third important Turkish port, on the Mediterranean, while Trabzon (Trebizond) is the major Black Sea port. Alexandretta has also been developed especially since 1941.

9/ See Tables in Appendix.

10/ Gabriel Bie Ravndal, American Consul General, Constantinople, Turkey: A Commercial and Industrial Handbook. U. S. Department of Commerce, Trade Promotion Series, No. 28 (Washington, 1926), 60.

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In 1920, 4,295 ships of 2,472,815 tonnage passed the Straits, and by 1924, 7,600,000 tons of shipping called at Istanbul. Exclusive of Turkish shipping, by 1930, a total of 19,100,000 tons was reached, though it dropped to less than 11,000,000 tons in 1939. 11/

C. Turkish Policy Concerning the Straits

Control of the Straits is the oldest and most crucial problem in the history of the Ottoman Empire and of the Turkish Republic. 12/ From the period of its advent in Europe in 1354, the Ottoman Empire defended its control of the Dardanelles, and from the period of 1453 until its downfall in 1918, it controlled the entire region of the Straits. In a single century the Ottoman Empire fought ten wars. Two wars were fought against armies marching from Egypt--Napoleon in 1799 and Mehmet Ali in 1833. Five wars were fought against Imperial Russia--1806, 1828, 1853-56, 1877 and 1914. Two wars were fought against sea powers from

the Mediterranean

11/ These figures are taken from the Annual Report of the Turkish Government to the League of Nations, as indicated in the Tables. However, the statistics vary. For instance, British figures for 1938 list 9,025 ships of 13,239,000 tons passing the Dardanelles and 15,041 ships of 18,059,000 tons passing through the Bosphorus. See S. R. Jordan, Report on Economic and Commercial Conditions in Turkey. Department of Overseas Trade, No. 729 (London, H.M.S.O. 1939), 33.

12/ Ernest Jackh, The Rising Crescent: Turkey, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (New York, Farrar and Rinehart, 1944), 60-61. See also, J. K. Birge, "Turkey Between Two World Wars," XX Foreign Policy Reports 16 (November 1, 1944), 194-207.

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the Mediterranean--Italy in 1911-1912 and the navies of Great Britain and France in the World War of 1914-1918. Four times the Ottoman Empire was allied with and protected by Great Britain against the menace of a land attack by Russia from the Balkans. Twice the Ottoman Empire was allied with Russia against a land attack from the direction of Egypt (1799, 1833). When a third party emerged, such as Imperial Germany or Nazi Germany, to challenge control of the Straits, Great Britain and Russia, Imperial or Soviet, took joint action with respect to the Straits.

Turkish policy in the inter-war period has demanded full sovereignty over the Straits, in order to guarantee the security of the Straits, of Istanbul, and of Turkish territory in general. Security assured, the Turkish Government has asserted its willingness to guarantee freedom of commerce through the Straits. The historic policy was stated in the Turkish National Pact, adopted by the Grand National Assembly at Ankara, on April 23, 1920: 13/

The security of the city of Constantinople, which is the seat of the caliphate of Islam, the capital of the sultanate, and the headquarters of the Ottoman Government, and of the Sea of Marmara, must be protected from every danger. Provided this principle is maintained, whatever decision may be arrived at jointly by us and all other interested governments concerned, regarding the opening of the Bosphorus to the commerce and traffic of the world, is valid.

At the Lausanne Conference in 1922-1923 the Turkish delegation stood for full sovereignty of the Straits, with the right to fortify the region, closure to warships and freedom of commerce. In assuming that position, the

Turkish

13/ A. J. Toynbee, The Western Question in Greece and Turkey (London, 1922), 209-210.

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Turkish Government, seconded by the Soviet delegation, asserted that it was only asking rights identical with those exercised by the American Government in the Panama Canal Zone and by the British Government with respect to the Suez Canal. 14/ The Turkish Government did not attain its desires at Lausanne, since the Lausanne Convention demilitarized the Straits and placed the region under an International Commission.

It was at the Conference for the Reduction of Armaments, on March 24, 1933 that Turkey made a first formal request for revision of the Lausanne Convention, 15/ though not until April 10, 1936, after the Germans had marched into the Rhineland (March 7, 1936), did the Turkish Government demand outright sovereignty over the region of the Straits, with full right to fortify the zone. The Convention of Montreux (1936) satisfied the Turkish demands, to all intents and purposes, in their entirety.

In the years following the last World War, Turkey pursued a policy of close understanding with the Soviet Union, based largely on the Treaty of Moscow of March 16, 1921 and the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality of December 17, 1925. The latter treaty was reaffirmed on December 17, 1929 and on March 25, 1941, with an additional declaration affirming an understanding in case either was the victim of an aggression on the part of a third power. 16/ Soviet-Turkish relations

cooled

14/ See Harry N. Howard, The Partition of Turkey (Norman, University of Oklahoma, 1931), 285-97.

15/ See especially the statement of Cemal Hüsni Bey, the Turkish delegate, League of Nations. Records of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. Series B. Minutes of the General Commission. I. December 14, 1932--June 29, 1933. IX. Disarmament. 1933. IX. 10. Forty-Seventh Meeting, March 24, 1933, sec. 92.

16/ On June 18, 1941, however, four days before the German attack on the Soviet Union, Turkey signed a treaty of friendship with Germany. See also T-516. The Soviet Union and the Problem of the Straits.

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cooled perceptibly after the Montreux Conference, however, as Turkey drew closer to Great Britain and France. In 1939 Turkey rejected a Soviet proposal which would have limited Turkish freedom in the Straits. On October 19, 1939, Turkey signed a treaty with Great Britain and France, making it an ally of these countries, though it was stipulated specifically that Turkey was not to be involved in war with the Soviet Union. 17/

Aside from these relations with the Great Powers of Europe, Turkey was a member of the League of Nations (July 1932), took a leading part in the Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente (February 9, 1934), 18/ and in the Pact of Sa'adabad (July 8, 1937), with Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. A close alliance was established with Greece, based on the treaties of October 30, 1930 and September 14, 1933. All in all the Republic of Turkey pursued a policy which contributed to the stability of the Near East in general and of the region of the Straits in particular.

As the war came in 1939 and developed in its early stages, Turkey continued as the guardian of the Straits, although with some fears as to Soviet intentions with respect to these strategic waters. For a time there were indications of a possible bargain between Germany and the Soviet Union concerning the Straits. Hitler made the change in his proclamation of war against the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, although it was vigorously

denied

17/ See J. H. Child's memorandum, December 13, 1939, on Turkey's International Political Commitments, 43 pr. See also T-517, Great Britain and the Problem of the Straits.

18/ See R. J. Kerner and H. N. Howard, The Balkan Conferences and the Balkan Entente, 1930-1935 (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1936), passim. See also T-518, The Balkan States and the Problem of the Turkish Straits.

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denied by the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, M. Molotov on numerous occasions. 19/ A few weeks after the German attack on the Soviet Union, the British and Soviet Governments in joint declarations at Ankara, on August 10, 1941, 20/ pledged "their fidelity to the Montreux Convention" and assured the Turkish Government that they had "no aggressive intentions or claims whatever with regard to the Straits." Both governments were "prepared scrupulously to observe the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic", and, moreover, were ready "to render Turkey every help and assistance in the event of her being attacked by a European power."

Despite these assurances there was continued apprehension on the part of Turkey as to Soviet intentions concerning the Straits. While the Soviet Union appeared reasonably satisfied with the Montreux Convention and had guaranteed it, the Turkish Government feared that at the end of the war, the Soviet Union might demand additional guarantees, which, together with possible territorial acquisitions in the Balkans, would constitute a substantial Soviet dominance in the Straits. Until the latter part of 1943 it appears that Great Britain and the United States were not urging Turkish entry into the war lest its involvement result in extending German lines into the Near East and drain United Nations supplies when they were seriously limited. When Mr. Churchill flew to Adana, Turkey for a conference with President Inönü, in February 1943, after his meeting with President Roosevelt at Casablanca, he did not press Turkey for

early entry

19/ See Adolf Hitler, My New Order. Edited with Commentary by Raoul de Roussy de Sales. (New York, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941), 984. See also the statements in the Moscow Pravda on June 27, 29 and October 5, 1941, denouncing the statement as a baseless lie. But see also John Scott, Duel For Europe (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1942), 150.

20/ See The London Times, August 7, 1941, for statement by Foreign Secretary Eden, and Goodrich-Jones-Myers, Documents on American Foreign Relations, IV (1941-1942), 696-97.

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early entry into the war, but expressed his wish to see "Turkish territories, rights and interests effectively preserved." He also desired "to see in particular warm and friendly relations established between Turkey" and the Soviet Union, to which Great Britain was bound by a twenty-year alliance. 21/ Differences in Anglo-American and Soviet policies toward Turkey were ironed out at the Teheran Conference in November 1943, and pressure was not applied to Ankara in order to secure the use of airfields for attacks on Rumanian oil centers and to stop the exports of vital raw materials, especially chrome, to Germany. As long as Turkey feared German retaliation for any assistance to the United Nations, they refused British and American requests. By June 1944, however, when military successes of the United Nations reduced the German menace, Turkey agreed to suspend chrome exports to Germany and to prevent the passage of partly dismantled German warships through the Straits. 22/

On August 2, 1944 Turkey broke off relations with Germany. 23/ By this action Turkey, no doubt, hopes

to secure

21/ For the British position see Prime Minister Churchill's statement to the House of Commons on February 11, 1943, in III United Nations Review 3 (March 15, 1943), 106-110.

22/ In his address of May 24, 1944, Prime Minister Churchill severely criticized Turkish policy, indicating that the dilatory tactics pursued by the Turkish Government would not "procure for the Turks the strong position at the peace table which would attend their joining the Allies." See also the Eden statement of June 14, 1944.

23/ New York Times, August 3, 1944. See also Prime Minister Churchill's address of August 3, ibid., August 3, 1944. Turkish official sources indicated, however, that Turkey would move immediately, if at all, into action against Germany for the following reasons: (1) A lack of conviction that the independence of Turkey is now likely to be involved as an issue of the war; (2) the strategic difficulty of holding European Turkey against attacks; (3) lack of

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to secure a voice in the peace settlement, especially, with respect to the frontiers of Turkey in Europe and the balance of power in the Balkan peninsula, and particularly in the question of the Straits. If the problem of the Straits should be raised in the future, the Turkish Government no doubt believes that its chances of retaining the control of the Straits, established at Montreux in 1936 will be enhanced by its overtures to the United Nations.

III. REGIMES OF THE STRAITS, 1920-1936

A. The Abortive Straits Convention of Sèvres, August 10, 1920

Under the Sèvres Convention a rigid "international" control over the Straits was established. 24/ Though Constantinople remained theoretically under Turkish sovereignty, Article XXXVII provided that navigation of the Straits was to be open in peace and war "to every vessel of commerce or of war and to military and commercial aircraft, without distinction of flag." The Straits were not to be subject to blockade, however, nor was any belligerent right or act to be committed within them, unless in accordance with a decision of the Council of the League of Nations. The entire region of the Straits

was placed

enthusiasm for eliminating Germany from the European balance of power and the advent of a "Pan-Slav" Soviet Russia in the Balkans; (4) The Turkish desire not to lose young men in battle who will have to carry on the Kamalist revolution; (5) No Turkish territorial ambitions to be satisfied; (6) uncertainty as to whether Soviet Russia desires Turkey to attack Bulgaria; (7) diminution of Turkey's importance as an Allied air base against German positions since the Soviet front has been moving progressively westward.

24/ Great Britain, Treaty Series No. 11 (1920). Treaty of Peace With Turkey, August 10, 1920. Cmd. 964.

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was placed under an International Commission, to be composed of the United States, whenever willing, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Russia (when a member of the League of Nations). The Commission was to act in "complete independence" of the Turkish Government. Decisions were to be made by majority vote. Article 60 declared that nothing in the provisions governing the Straits should "limit the powers of a belligerent or belligerents acting in pursuance of a decision by the Council of the League of Nations"-- a Council in which the Great Powers dominated. Moreover, the Commission of the Straits, composed of the Allied Powers, was authorized "to prepare, issue and enforce" as well as to amend and repeal the regulations for the Straits. The Sèvres Convention, which proved abortive, thanks to the resistance of the Turks, placed the regulation of the Straits under the naval dominance of Great Britain, and was designed not only to keep Turkey in subjugation, but to threaten the position of Russia in the Black Sea through the access which it would have given to the British and other Allied fleets.

B. The Straits Convention of
Lausanne, July 24, 1923

The Convention of the Straits, signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923, established a new régime for the control of those strategic waters, following the defeat of Greece in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1923. 25/ Article 1 affirmed the principle "of freedom of transit and of navigation by sea and by air in the Strait of the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus." For commercial vessels and non-military aircraft there was to be complete freedom of passage. In wartime, Turkey being neutral, complete freedom was to prevail, and if Turkey were belligerent, there was to be freedom

for neutral

25/ For the Lausanne Conference see: République française. Ministère des affaires étrangères. Documents diplomatiques. Conférence de Lausanne sur les affaires du proche-orient (1922-1923). Recueil des actes de la conférence. Première série, Tomes I-IV; Deuxième série, Tomes I-II. Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1923. Turkey No. 1 (1923). Lausanne

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for neutral vessels and non-military aircraft, if no assistance were given the enemy. No measures which Turkey might take to prevent enemy passage were to prejudice the free passage of neutral vessels. Warships which any one Power, in peacetime, might send through the Straits into the Black Sea, were not to exceed the strength of the most powerful Black Sea fleet--the Russian. The Powers, nevertheless, reserved the right "at all times and under all circumstances," to send not more than three warships into the Black Sea, none to exceed 10,000 tons each. In wartime, Turkey being neutral, complete freedom for warships prevailed, though hostile acts were forbidden. If Turkey were at war, neutral vessels were allowed freedom of the Straits, though strict regulations were laid down. Sanitary inspection was provided.

The zone of the Straits was completely demilitarized. It included the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus, with a land region running about seventy-five miles by three to fifteen miles inland. With the exception of Kizil Adalar, the Marmara isles were demilitarized. The Rabbit Islands, Imbros and Tenedos (Turkish) and Lemnos, Samothrace, Chios, Mitylene, Nikaria and Samos (Greek), were also demilitarized. It was stipulated that no permanent fortifications, artillery organization, naval, submarine or air base should exist in the zone. However, Constantinople was allowed a garrison of 12,000 and a naval base and arsenal could be established there.

To enforce these provisions an International Commission of the Straits, with headquarters at Istanbul, was created. It was to be composed of one representative each from Turkey (President), France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and the Soviet Union. By adhering to the Convention, the United States might become a member.

Turkey had desired, if the Straits were demilitarized, an individual and collective guarantee of the region of the

Straits,

Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922-1923. Cmd. 1814.
The text of the treaty is contained in Treaty Series No. 16
(1923). Treaty of Peace with Turkey, and Other Instruments
Signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923. Cmd. 1929.

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Straits, but the Powers refused to consider such a proposal. Instead they merely offered, if freedom of the Straits or the security of the region were threatened, to act in conjunction, "by all the means that the Council of the League of Nations may decide for this purpose." The result was that the Turks did not obtain an effective guarantee of security, and the Straits were secure only in time of peace. In case of war, even when Turkey was neutral, the country could not be safe from attack.

Moreover, the Russians looked upon the provisions of the Convention of the Straits as a constant threat to their Black Sea shores. The Soviet delegation at Lausanne held that the new Convention threatened "the security and vital interests" of the Soviet Union; and it made impossible the establishment of a stable and peaceful situation in the Near East and the Black Sea; and that it would impose the burden of additional naval armaments on the Soviet Union and other riverain states, and would not, therefore, serve the interests of peace. Not until August 14, 1923 did the Soviet Government sign the Lausanne Convention, and it never ratified the Treaty. 26/

C. The Montreux Straits Convention,
July 20, 1936 27/

The Montreux Convention of the Straits represented the fifth revision of the statutes governing the Straits since the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829 and the third since 1920. The Montreux Conference, called to revise the Convention of Lausanne (1923) at the request of the Turkish Government, 28/ threw into full light the

traditional

26/ See Harry N. Howard, The Partition of Turkey, Ch. IX.

27/ See Actes de la Conference de Montreux concernant le régime des Détroits. 22 juin--20 juillet 1936. Compte-rendu des seances plenieres et proces-verbal des debats du comité technique (Liege, Belgium, 1936), 310 pp.

28/ For text of Turkish note of April 10, 1936, see Stephen Heald and J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, Documents on International Affairs, 1936 (London, Oxford, 1937), 645-48.

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traditional differences of views and interests of the riverain and non-riverain Powers of the Black Sea. The Turks, who had felt insecure under the provisions of the Convention of Lausanne, because Turkey was not genuinely guaranteed against attack despite the demilitarization of the region of the Straits, asked complete sovereignty over the Straits with the full right to fortify the region, but granted the principle of commercial freedom. The Soviet Union, as the primary Black Sea naval power, desired the most complete freedom of passage through the Straits for war vessels, while limiting as strictly as possible the access of foreign warships through the Straits into the Black Sea. The non-riverain Powers, especially Great Britain, tried, in general, to maintain a certain balance in the Black Sea, and in case of war with a Black Sea Power, to safeguard freedom of action. 29/

Like the Lausanne Convention, the Montreux Convention 30/ recognized and affirmed "the principle of freedom of transit and navigation by sea in the Straits." In time of peace, merchant vessels were to enjoy complete freedom, though they were subject to sanitary regulations on entering the Straits either via the Black or the Aegean Sea. In time of war, Turkey being a non-belligerent, merchant vessels, under any flag or with any type of cargo, were also to enjoy complete freedom of transit and navigation in the Straits. In time of war, Turkey being belligerent, merchant vessels of friendly powers were to enjoy freedom of transit and navigation in the Straits on condition that they did not assist the enemy. Moreover such vessels were required to enter the Straits by day and to travel a route indicated by the Turkish authorities. Similar provisions were to apply if Turkey considered itself in imminent danger of war.

In time

29/ Fernand de Visscher, "La nouvelle convention des Détroits (Montreux, le 21 juillet 1936)," Revue de Droit International et de Législation Comparée, 3me Série, XVII, No. 4 (1936), 669-718.

30/ Turkey No. 1 (1936). Convention regarding the Régime of the Straits, with Correspondence relating thereto. Montreux, July 20, 1936. Cmd. 5249. See also T-539; "The Montreux Convention of the Straits (1936)."

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In time of peace, light surface vessels, small warships and auxiliary ships, whether under the flag of a Black Sea Power or of a non-riverain Power, were to enjoy freedom of transit through the Straits, though passage was to be made by day. The maximum naval tonnage which foreign powers might send through the Straits at any one time was not to exceed 15,000 tons, though Black Sea Powers might exceed that tonnage on condition that their vessels pass through singly, escorted by not more than two destroyers. Notice of intention to pass warships through the Straits was to be given in all cases. 31/ In no case were warships to use any aircraft which they might be carrying.

Under ordinary circumstances the aggregate tonnage which non-Black Sea Powers could have in the Black Sea was not to exceed 30,000 tons. However, if the strongest fleet in the Black Sea (the Soviet fleet) should exceed by 10,000 tons the tonnage of the strongest fleet in the Black Sea at the date of signing the Montreux Convention the non-riverain tonnage could be increased by 10,000 tons to a maximum of 45,000 tons. But whatever the mission involved, vessels of non-riverain powers were not to remain in the Black Sea longer than twenty-one days.

In time of war, Turkey being neutral, warships were to "enjoy complete freedom of transit and navigation through the Straits" under the same conditions as those outlined above, embodied in Articles I to XVIII. Belligerent warships, however, were not to pass through the Straits "except in cases arising out of the application of Article XXV", which provided that nothing in the Convention should prejudice the "rights and obligations of Turkey, or of any of the other High Contracting Parties members of the League of Nations, arising out of the Covenant of the League of Nations." Another exception would arise

"in cases

31/ These provisions were not to prevent a naval force "of any tonnage or composition" from paying a courtesy visit "of limited duration" to a port in the Straits at the invitation of the Turkish Government.

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"in cases of assistance rendered to a State victim of aggression in virtue of a treaty of mutual assistance binding Turkey, concluded within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and registered and published in accordance with the provisions of Article XVIII of the Covenant." Belligerent warships, however, were not to make any capture, or carry out any other hostile acts within the Straits.

Article XX provided that in time of war, Turkey being belligerent, the provisions of Articles X to XVIII should not be applicable, and the passage of warships was to be left exclusively to the discretion and judgment of the Turkish Government. Moreover, if Turkey considered itself in danger of imminent war, the provisions of Article XX were to apply. In such instance, however, Turkish actions were to be subject to a vote of the Council of the League of Nations. If a majority of two-thirds of the Council disapproved of the Turkish actions, the Turkish Government undertook to discontinue the measures in question.

To assure the passage of civil aircraft between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the Turkish Government was to indicate the routes to be traveled, "outside the forbidden zones which may be established in the Straits."

The International Commission of the Straits, which was established by the Lausanne Convention and functioned under the League of Nations, was abolished, and its functions were transferred to the Turkish Government. The Turkish Government, for example, was to collect shipping statistics concerning traffic in the Straits. Likewise, it was to supervise the execution of all provisions relative to the passage of warships through the Straits. An annual report was to be made to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

The Montreux Convention was to be ratified and to remain in force for twenty years, but "the principle of freedom of transit and navigation affirmed in Article I of the present Convention shall however continue without limit of time." If no notice of denunciation is given two years prior to the expiration of the Montreux Convention, it is to remain in force "until two years after

such notice

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such notice shall have been given." In the event of denunciation, however, the contracting parties agree to call a conference for the purpose of concluding a new convention of the Straits. Moreover, Article XXIX stipulates that at the end of each five year period the signatories may make proposals for amendment to the Convention, though to be valid such proposals must be seconded by two other signatories. 32/

IV. SUMMARY

The Lausanne Convention contained three essential elements, directly interconnected: (1) the principle of freedom of passage and navigation within the Straits; (2) demilitarization of the zone of the Straits; (3) a kind of international guarantee of the region of the Straits against attack. Under the Montreux Convention of 1936 only a single one of these principles remains, that of freedom of the Straits. Moreover, the principle of freedom of the Straits now rests on the fidelity of the Turkish Republic to its signature of the Convention, since the Turkish Republic now has full sovereignty over the region, with the right to fortify the zone of the Straits.

32/ Any request for revision must be notified to all signatories three months prior to the end of any five year period. If it is impossible to reach agreement through diplomatic channels, a conference is to be called. Such conferences may take decisions only by unanimous vote, except in revision of Articles XIV to XVIII, for which a three-fourths majority is sufficient. The majority, however, must include three-fourths of the Black Sea Powers, including Turkey.

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APPENDIX I

SHIPS PASSING THROUGH THE STRAITS, 1872-1935

[From Franz von Caucig, "Die wirtschaftliche Seite der Dardanellenfrage," XIV Zeitschrift für Politik 2 (February 1937), 104]

State	1872	1882	1911	1914	1932	1935
Great Britain*	629* 1,750	49* 3,106	-- 4,831	-- 2,007	-- 482	-- 535
Greece*	3,450* 18	2,014* 343	-- 2,908	-- 1,159	-- 320	-- 182
Russia*	516* 306	206* 445	-- 1,301	-- 675	-- 311	-- 85
Austria-Hun- gary*	755* 400	207* 393	-- 1,124	-- 566	-- --	-- --
Italy*	1,448* 148	515 264	-- 698	-- 704	-- 668	-- 458
France*	7* 265	-- 374	-- 491	-- 429	-- 145	-- 73
Germany*	177* 4	2 49	-- 442	-- 303	-- 135	-- 143
Rumania*	-- --	40* --	-- 406	-- 328	-- 196	-- 230
Belgium*	2* 36	-- 43	-- 234	-- 178	-- 33	-- 9
Netherlands*	3* 23	-- 1	-- 122	-- 150	-- 95	-- 54
Bulgaria*	-- --	-- --	-- 234	-- 138	-- 72	-- 108
Denmark*	1* 7	-- 17	-- 101	-- 35	-- 31	-- 7
Norway*	218* 12	12* 65	-- 133	-- 106	-- 47	-- 36

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State	1872	1882	1911	1914	1932	1935
United States*	4*	--	--	--	--	--
	--	--	78	66	43	43
Sweden*	--	--	--	--	--	--
	--	--	39	45	75	55
Poland	--	--	--	--	5	59
Others	--	13	38	78	68	56
Total	10,179	8,158	13,180	6,957	2,726	2,133
Turkey*	32,697*	21,824*	--	--	--	14,264
	706	623	8,158	7,794	6,895	1,990
Grand Total	43,582	30,605	21,338	14,761	9,621	18,547

*Sailing Vessels

TOTAL TONNAGE

	1872	1882	1911	1914	1932	1935
Foreign	3,858,095	5,010,050	19,306,487	10,852,742	9,842,071	7,385,030
Turkish	1,020,425	624,401	864,578	1,080,607	2,896,385	3,156,885
Total	4,878,520	5,634,451	20,171,065	11,933,349	12,738,466	10,541,915

APPENDIX II

STATISTICS CONCERNING SHIPPING IN THE STRAITSRegistered Net Tonnage
(1913-1941)

These statistical data have been gathered from the following sources: 1) Rapport de la Commission des Détroits à la Société des Nations (1924-33) 2) République Turque. Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Rapport Annuel sur le Mouvement des Navires à Travers les Détroits et des Aéronefs Civils entre la Méditerranée et la Mer Noire, (1936-1941); 3) T. C. Istanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odasi Mecmuası (Bulletin de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie d'Istanbul (1941); Basvurâlet İstatistik. Umum Mudurlugu (République turque. Présidence du Conseil. Office central de statistique.) İstatistik Yilligi (Annuaire Statistique) Vol. 12. No. 194. 1940-41 (Ankara, 1941).

Flag	1913 1/	1920 2/	1921	1922	1923
American		266,679	300,277	589,778	222,481
British	5,370,781	557,353	204,065	1,488,171	1,994,689
Dutch	199,034	46,419	121,488	210,754	380,817
French	572,730	231,318	500,062	644,073	632,087
German	733,600	---	38,508	38,311	167,651
Greek	1,958,201	331,203	559,338	614,804	276,283
Italian	370,302	329,491	385,684	759,062	1,513,180
Rumanian	350,302	138,537	172,885	284,925	457,564
Russian	1,428,435	256,375	64,371	31,042	68,498
Turkish	906,416	77,331	18,453	25,668	296,322
Austro-	1,615,293				
Hungarian					
Belgian	295,038				
Norwegian	288,203				
Other		238,109	360,277	473,162	490,606
Total	13,412,065	2,472,815	2,725,408	5,164,650	6,500,178

1/ From Phillipson and Suxton, The Question of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, 232-33. In 1911 the number of vessels passing the Bosphorus was 34,562, with a total tonnage of 19,968,409; in 1912 there were 34,577, with a total of 15,298,537; and in 1913 there were 34,826 vessels, with a total tonnage of 13,412,065.

2/ G. B. Ravndal, Turkey: A Commercial and Industrial Handbook, 60.

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STATISTICS CONCERNING SHIPPING IN THE TURKISH STRAITS[1924-1941]Registered Net Tonnage

Flag	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
<u>General</u>						
American	159,938	154,000	126,941	166,809	203,110	287,187
British	1,984,783	2,242,000	2,499,471	2,080,330	1,915,053	2,778,946
Dutch	396,799	328,000			397,654	422,436
French	570,412	627,000	825,039	831,429	866,010	897,847
German	260,863	469,000	464,337	540,817	576,943	643,566
Italian	1,518,052	1,802,000	2,463,861	2,624,822	2,214,586	3,538,205
Norwegian	112,773	169,000	362,186		689,853	905,048
Polish	5,191	9,000			6,335	7,197
<u>Regional</u>						
Bulgarian	87,183	92,000	83,701	87,041	103,509	117,673
Egyptian	48,876	151,000			106,509	112,402
Greek	827,000	1,270,000	2,122,861	1,592,795	779,950	1,243,082
Palest- inian						
Rumanian	364,134	479,000	550,873	432,331	468,183	489,164
Russian	172,402	196,000	188,022	295,004	468,891	572,095
Turkish ^{3/}	715,103	774,000				
Yugoslav	36,173	31,000	143,154	91,422	22,780	64,948
<u>Totals</u>	<u>7,646,550</u>	<u>9,178,000</u>	<u>10,643,812</u>	<u>9,897,579</u>	<u>9,218,371</u>	<u>12,767,012</u>

^{3/} The figures for Turkey, which are not included after 1925, do not include sailing vessels and coasting vessels from the Sea of Marmara, amounting to about 300,000 tons.

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STATISTICS CONCERNING SHIPPING IN THE TURKISH STRAITS

(Cont'd)

Flag	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
<u>General</u>						
American	468,850	370,802	196,717	175,850	147,048	189,252
British	3,669,816	3,654,132	2,847,770	2,616,755	2,586,817	1,986,232
Dutch	531,458	669,618	503,676	562,884	423,356	353,357
French	889,518	1,109,469	1,011,056	524,625	518,136	394,250
German	806,860	813,099	619,064	655,566	573,083	452,073
Italian	4,551,027	5,016,973	4,230,477	4,160,918	3,414,456	2,527,164
Norwegian	1,108,512	1,451,169	2,104,843	2,232,632	2,165,998	968,032
Polish	6,916					
<u>Regional</u>						
Bulgarian	90,016			91,143	130,873	135,792
Egyptian	113,968			103,406	73,454	45,619
Greek	3,400,512	3,351,389	2,469,396	2,974,505	2,294,990	1,861,400
Rumanian	547,620	605,816	643,038	770,399	749,895	654,788
Russian	612,713	324,472	752,340	985,961	912,792	1,614,564
Yugoslav	167,770			124,841	101,906	6,080
<u>Totals</u>	<u>17,864,753</u>	<u>19,198,346</u>	<u>17,514,641</u>	<u>17,445,427</u>	<u>15,504,374</u>	<u>12,322,012</u>

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STATISTICS CONCERNING SHIPPING IN THE TURKISH STRAITS

(Cont'd)

Flag	1936 ^{5/} :Aug. 15- :Dec. 31, : 1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941 : January- : May 1941 ^{6/}
<u>General</u>						
American	108,512	207,013	275,545	311,356	212,758	
British	923,796	2,601,497	2,890,184	1,501,004	693,040	138,705
Dutch	152,852	569,165	372,842	370,703	82,670	
French	291,201	1,261,999	408,073	295,444	169,312	
German	373,323	754,434	627,384	372,818	26,263	128,510
Italian	791,156	2,167,770	1,604,666	1,601,067	479,051	11,280
Norwegian	229,480	959,658	743,700	546,927	46,083	
Polish	255,264	187,289	196,998	7,255		
<u>Regional</u>						
Bulgarian	133,022	180,379	154,413	179,798	181,482	18,183
Egyptian	24,881	30,304	22,881	39,287	28,133	
Greek	341,929	1,648,211	1,576,094	930,142	526,682	225,464
Palest- inian	58,964	75,584				
Rumanian	474,059	709,536	647,391	845,136	546,816	175,180
Russian	368,410	1,111,351	740,098	314,754	125,409	146,438
Turkish ^{4/}	2,315,981		2,875,777	3,154,522	2,970,880	1,636,513
Yugoslav		57,438	67,040	79,977	30,170	5,750
Totals	4,781,232	12,937,364	10,762,266	7,720,253	3,238,974	2,575,668

4/ The figures for Turkey, 1936-1941 are taken from T. C. Istanbul Ticaret ve Sanayi Odasi Meclasi (Bulletin de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie d'Istanbul). They are not included in the total figures for the years indicated.

5/ There was no report, apparently, for the months of January to August 1936, since the Commission of the Straits ceased to function in the fall of 1936. The monthly figures in Bulletin de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie d'Istanbul make a total of 18,219,990 tons for the entire year 1936, Turkish shipping included.

6/ These figures are taken from Bulletin de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie d'Istanbul for the period indicated.